

Phacelia lenta Piper
sticky phacelia
Hydrophyllaceae (Waterleaf family)

Status: State Threatened, USFWS Species of Concern
Rank: G2S2

General Description: A clump-forming perennial herb with both hairy and glandular herbage. Plants have one to many erect stems, generally 6 to 12 inches tall, from a taproot and branched rootstock. The leaves of the basal cluster are largest (up to 5 inches long), the blade being about twice the length of the petiole. The blades are about twice as long as broad and are divided into 4 to 9 paired lobes, each lobe being again incised up to two thirds of the way to the middle. The stem leaves gradually become smaller upward. Each stem has a 2 to 5 inch, branched, tightly packed cluster of flowers. The flowers are restricted to the upper side of the branches. Flowers are about 1/4 inch long with white petals and exerted stamens with conspicuous purple filaments which turn brown with age. The capsules develop within the persistent flowers, producing 15-20 small black seeds.

Identification Tips: *Phacelia lenta* can be distinguished from other members of the genus occurring within its range by the following combination of characters: a clump-forming perennial with glandular herbage, bipinnatifid leaves, persistent white corollas, and long-exserted stamens with purple filaments.

Phenology: Flower bud formation probably begins by mid-April, with most plants reaching full bloom by mid-May. Some individuals may have flowers present as late as mid-June. Fruit capsules begin to develop in early June. In the more advanced individuals, dehiscence may occur as early as late June.

Range: The taxon is currently known only from Douglas County, WA, from an area approximately 12 x 8 miles. The type specimen was collected from the "Bare hills of Columbia River, Washington Territory." It is impossible to ascertain whether this was from Douglas County or elsewhere along the Columbia River. However, recent searches of suitable habitat have not located the taxon outside of Douglas County. The species is restricted to the Columbia Basin physiographic province.

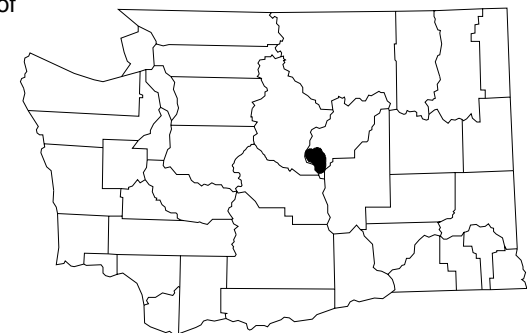
Habitat: *Phacelia lenta* is endemic to a small area of the arid Columbia Basin region. It occurs on cliff crevices and adjacent

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Known distribution of
Phacelia lenta in
Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Habitat (continued) : open rocky habitats, occasionally being found on the talus below rock outcrops and on the upper rim of these outcrops. Elevation ranges from 1300 to 3400 feet.

Ecology: *Phacelia lenta* occurs primarily on basalt cliffs and ledges and cracks in basalt outcrops. Generally there is very little other vegetation present. However, due to the harshness of the environment (little or no soil development, limited water availability, etc.) competition may actually be quite high for suitable microsites.

State Status Comments: All known occurrences are within a very limited range. Suitable habitat comprises only a small percentage of the area within this range. The total number of occurrences, as well as the total number of individuals, is relatively small.

Inventory Needs: Suitable habitat within Douglas County and adjacent areas should continue to be inventoried for this species.

Threats and Management Concerns: The primary potential threat to *Phacelia lenta* is direct destruction of its habitat. Rock quarrying activities should not be undertaken in areas which harbor this species. Road construction should similarly avoid the species' habitat. Aerial application of herbicides to adjacent agricultural fields may also pose some degree of threat.

References:

Alverson, E. 1982. The rediscovery of *Phacelia lenta*. *Douglasia* 6(2): 1.

Gillett, G.W. 1960. A systematic treatment of the *Phacelia franklinii* group. *Rhodora* 62(740): 205-222.

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